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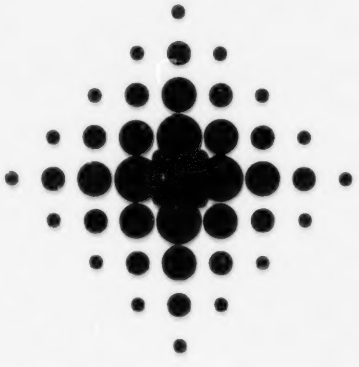
Synthèse critique

Analysis of the Division of Labour and the Labour Force in Social Service Structures in Québec: Towards a New Definition of Professionalism

Barbara Heppner,
Linda Davies



COMMISSION D'ENQUÊTE
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ANALYSIS OF THE DIVISION OF LABOUR AND OF THE LABOUR FORCE IN SOCIAL SERVICE STRUCTURES IN QUEBEC: TOWARD A NEW DEFINITION OF PROFESSIONALISM

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December, 1986

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Analysis of the Division of Labour and of the Labour Force in Social Service Structures in Quebec. Practice Implications of that Analysis: Toward a New Definition of Professionalism.

INTRODUCTION

To situate the problem of the division of labour in Quebec social service structures in terms of "dequalification" is perhaps to prejudge the question. Whether dequalification of the social service labour force has in fact occurred is an empirical question, susceptible to exploration as to numbers of workers and task-levels before and after Chapter 48 and the Youth Protection Act, in both French and English social service structures. Yet it is our contention that many important elements in understanding the labour process of workers and the evolution of the division of work within social service structures remain untouched by a narrow focus on dequalification.

What is far more certain is that in the last ten years the social service structures have been seriously pressured. Repeated economic crises and structural shifts in the occupational structure have rapidly and perhaps permanently altered

social relations (e.g., the extent of youth unemployment), have made social problems more urgent, and have opened up new target populations. At the same time, resources are contracting, placing many more guests around a rapidly diminishing pie. The net effect for Quebec social service structures and for those who manage and work within them has been to raise into high relief a contradiction of decreasing state budgets on the one hand, while on the other, expectations have risen for service from the state.

Dynamic of forces bearing upon the division of labour and the labour force within state social services structures

On the macro level of the Quebec state, major tension arises from its quasi-inexorable growth, at the same time that massive tendencies toward cost containment render impossible adequate support of programs. At the next level of state social service structures, this translates into three groups contending for control. Our argument is that these three forces (bureaucratic managerialism, professionalism, and progressive coalitions of users of services) contend, ally, form, and re-form alliances. The nature of these alliances or how they might be constructed has yet to be identified, as does any effect such alliances exert on the organization of social service work. Certain paradoxical consequences are, at the same time, clearly apparent:

1) Technocratic rationalism dictates the use of CEGEP or university-trained graduates in narrowly defined social service occupations. Contrary to plan, however, such social work tasks require, at all levels, a measure of autonomy which is not foreseer by bureaucratic management.

2) The ideology of social work professionalism had its zenith in the 1950s, although its major material support in occupational growth occurred in Quebec only after Chapter 48. At the same time, this rise in the number of professionals employed by state agencies took place within an organizational context of judicially imposed mandates and bureaucratic hierarchies dominating "professional" practice.

3) Finally, the ideology of professionalism is also used to obscure real differences, those arising from different interests of front-line workers and managers of C.S.S.'s, for example; and between elite training institutions in universities and technocratic decision makers.

4) Unions, popular groups, alternative community organizations, and other progressive political movements played their part in shaping the organizational terrain (e.g., as in certain C.L.S.C.s). Yet in general, the direction of state social services has continued to drift toward sanitized service delivery rendered by "neutral" technocratic agents.

5) Major tension also arises from the contradictory powers between the state as legislator and the state as employer. As legislator, the state sets and enforces conditions for collective bargaining, at times sets wage guidelines, and may, for example, legislate anti-discrimination legislation affecting working conditions. Yet as significant employer (one estimate is that it provides employment for nearly two-thirds of graduates from Quebec universities), it may benefit from conditions it legislates in its other role. Thus, as employer, government's bona-fides' is problematic, since broad political self-interest often overrides any positive employment practices it might wish to act upon as a model employer. Recent examples include nullifying a signed collective agreement and rolling back public sector wages by twenty percent.

THEORETICAL EXPLANATIONS OF THE ORGANIZATION OF WORK

We will begin by briefly reviewing some of the major theoretical approaches to the problematic of the organization of work and the division of labour in modern capitalist societies. At the outset we will consider the major tenets of Harry Braverman's seminal analysis of the degradation of work in the twentieth century (Labour and Monopoly Capital, 1974), and the relationship of this phenomenon to the capitalist

mode of production. Braverman is widely credited with re-opening a Marxist debate on the capitalist labour process, a debate which is still active (Elger, 1979; Edwards, 1978, 1979; Thompson, 1983; Beechey, 1982; Salaman, 1979). Braverman's major focus was on manufacturing workers; however, the shift in the occupational structure from manufacturing to service industry and the subsequent growth of the public sector has prompted research on the implications of his analysis in these areas, including state health and social service workers whose labour is performed in bureaucratic settings (Frost, 1977; Carchedi, 1977; Heraud, 1978; Fryer, 1978; Davis, 1979; Saunders, 1979; Crompton, 1983; Davies, 1985).

Deskilling thesis

Braverman employs a Marxist framework in analyzing the principles of management, the role of science, and the evolution of modern technology, and the implications for the occupational structure. His basic premise is that the capitalist labour process is dominated and shaped by the accumulation of capital. Degradation of work, according to Braverman, results from two central imperatives of the capitalist labour process. The first is the concern to cheapen labour, and the second is to guarantee effective capitalist control over the production process. Application of the principles of scien-

tific management involves a process of continuous subdivision and reorganization of the work process to bring it under effective managerial control. Braverman argues that the fractionalization and routinization of work have resulted in a steady decline in the skills, knowledge, and responsibilities of most workers.

Braverman challenged the thesis that the increase in white-collar work represents evidence of a growing middle class. Rather, he argues that these workers, as well, have become proletarianized, noting the tendency for newer occupations to become subject to management control through bureaucratic and administrative mechanisms.

Quebec social services and the deskilling thesis

Reason exists to imagine this deskilling thesis applies to Quebec social service structures. Lésemann points to effects on the occupational structure of the vast proliferation of middle-management positions and supervisory posts, while centralization of decision making at the very highest echelons of state power has simultaneously occurred (Lésemann, 1979).[1]

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[1] From 1966 to 1971, 90% of new jobs in Quebec were created in the tertiary (service) sector and the majority of these in the public sector. A study in 1973 showed that two-thirds of French university graduates in the sixties were employed in the public sector. Between 1964 and 1971, the number of management positions in the public-service sector increased 400%, yet top-management (administrative director) posts actually decreased within the same period from 18% to 5.3% (Lésemann, 1980).

In Quebec, it is argued that the state may exert a monopoly control in the field of social services. "Through mechanisms of centralized finance and control and regional planning and coordination, the state defines not only who will receive such services, but how needs are to be defined and met" (Davies and Thomson, 1983, p. 14). Extensive division of labour, characteristic of Quebec social service bureaucracies, locates direct social work practice at the lowest levels of the hierarchy. As Davies and Thomson state, "The predominance of managerial authority is creating a marked polarization within the social work profession between those who manage and those who are managed. With the imposition on social workers of the state version and definition of 'welfare,' practice is more and more constrained to fall within the boundaries defined by the MAS" (1982, p. 14).

As elsewhere, state social service organizations in Quebec have adopted criteria of "efficiency and rationality" from the private sector. Management techniques which depend upon quantitative measures such as cost-benefit analyses and planned program budgeting systems are also utilized. As Leonard argues, such action tries to promote an image of social work as a "purely technical activity, viz. the the delivery of expert services within an overall management plan" (1979). While this may be a comforting picture for the technocratic planners, such standardization procedures fail to appreciate the realities of day-to-day social work prac-

tice, where, for instance, many "unproductive" hours may be spent calming and comforting an abused child recently removed from his home (Davies and Thomson, 1983).

In the context of such developments in the organization of social service delivery systems, some Marxist welfare theorists are asking whether the thesis of proletarianization of the labour process can be applied to state welfare occupations such as social work. In this view, organization of and control over the labour process of public sector workers mirror the capitalist labour process of the productive sphere. We will briefly investigate this hypothesis in relation to state social workers.

Application of the proletarianization thesis to state social work[1]

Frost (1977) contends that many of the features of the capitalist labour process have now been reproduced within the social work labour process. The trend toward centralization of management control within social service structures is theoretically analyzed by Frost, following Braverman, in terms of the scientific management principles of Taylor. Within this framework, it is postulated that control over the labour process is sought through the separation of "conception from execution" of tasks. Further, it is argued, plan-

[1] This section relies heavily on previous work by the authors Davies and Thomson (1983), and Davies (1985).

ning and coordinating functions, i.e., conception, are increasingly controlled by a small number of senior managers and administrators. The performance (execution) of tasks is then carried out by front-line field workers. This concurs with Braverman's analysis that the "overall purpose of all administrative control is, as in the case of production controls, the illumination of uncertainty and the exercise of constraint to achieve the desired result" (Braverman, 1974, p. 265).

However, within social work the basis for technical control is limited because of the unpredictable and unique nature of the input (clients), and the basis of social work production in specific skills largely employed in face-to-face contact with clients beyond management scrutiny. Social workers are thus not subject to direct monitoring; management must rely on indirect means through administrative procedures and its control of resources which may shape practitioners' options.

At the same time, since labour costs do represent a major portion of government spending, it is maintained that control over the labour process of state workers is necessary to improve the productivity of social welfare organizations. Management efforts are analyzed as directed toward increasing the rate of exploitation of state workers through a subdivision of social work activity into separate tasks which may then be performed by interchangeable and/or cheaper units of

labour such as human relations agents or social counsellors. These processes, it is argued, combine to produce a tendency toward deskilling social work practice and proletarianization of the social worker (Frost, 1977).

Braverman (1974) identified this as "the disassociation of the labour process from the skills of the worker; the labour process must be rendered independent of craft, tradition, and workers' knowledge." In this process, once management's monopoly over knowledge of the production process is complete, each step of the labour process and its execution can then be controlled. In social work we would expect it to be reflected in a trend toward increasing separation between control and practice. However, perhaps because the basis of service delivery is through individual social workers to individual clients, this latter state of total management monopoly becomes difficult to envisage.

Immediate control over her labour process is maintained by the social worker precisely because much social work practice is composed of direct face-to-face interaction between the worker and client(s), often outside the agency. Direct monitoring is, therefore, not feasible; rather, management must use more indirect means of control, such as coordination of resources, and conformity to bureaucratic norms, such as obligatory recording and filing activity reports on practice.

Critique of deskilling thesis in relation to social work practice

Does this form of management control perhaps extend to social work, capitalist work relations, and division of labour, which echo the principles of Taylor's scientific management? As we have seen, some theorists believe that these tendencies are now apparent in the social work labour process. These tendencies are perhaps most clearly revealed in the area of statutory work, such as child abuse, which has been an area of social work practice subject to management intervention. However, it is clear that this analysis of the capitalist labour process cannot be mechanically applied to social work since the latter is a process under the control of the state. The state is a political apparatus which takes its form through the balance of class forces. Thus, changes in the organization of state social work cannot be explained as a directly economic occurrence subject in the same way that Braverman tried to explain the capitalist labour process (Frost, 1977).

Given the difficulty of direct monitoring of welfare labour processes, we would expect a certain level of discretion to remain with front-line workers. Further, given the nature of human predicaments being presented to social service departments, the possibility of such standardization of practice seems remote even if it were thought desirable. Research has indicated that a straightforward thesis of pro-

letarianization is problematic when applied to welfare practice (Davies, 1985). Braverman's analysis, therefore, is overly deterministic in relation to the practice of social work. This theoretical approach fails to address the contradictory nature of social work practice, particularly apparent in statutory practice, where both care and control objectives simultaneously exist.

Another difficulty with the thesis of proletarianization, as applied to professional occupations, is that it seemingly ignores theories concerned with the opposite tendency of "professionalization." The Braverman thesis of the degradation of work, although seductive, does not adequately dispel the opposite notion of social workers as powerful professionals whose decisions are assumed to be highly discretionary and not subject to public accountability and control. This "professionalization" thesis, advanced by Wilding (1982) and others, posits the ability of professions to gain for their members an occupational monopoly which allows them autonomy to determine occupational tasks and functions, and achieve high status and rewards. How can we account for the popularity of this position, particularly among consumers of professional services? Why, on one hand, do theorists posit increasing management control over professional workers within state bureaucracies, while on the other hand, an image persists of such workers as powerful professional experts? (Davies 1985).

OTHER THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO PROFESSIONAL OCCUPATIONS

Johnson (1977) points out that there are dualistic and contradictory tendencies occurring within professional occupations. Such competing views of trends in the professional occupational production process as the proletarianization thesis (with which Braverman is associated) and the professionalization thesis (which Braverman and his followers hoped to counter), Johnson believes fail to adequately integrate this duality:

> In the first instance, the professions are seen as undergoing a process of proletarianization deriving from their increasing subordination to bureaucratic authority: a process which is seen to be inherent in rationalizing consequences of large-scale enterprise. ... The implications of the second view are that the strategic authority structures of post-industrial societies will be characterized by the domination of professionals rather than their subordination, thus creating the conditions for the emergence of knowledge based occupational groups as the dominant class--some form of technocracy (Johnson, 1977b, p. 298).

Johnson identifies a form of occupational control known as heteronomy, which may reflect these opposing tendencies in the social service sector. Heteronomy, or mediation, is a form of institutionalized occupational control -- wherein state mediation of occupation-client relationships occurs. In this form of occupational control, "the authority to determine the recipients and content of practice is removed from the producer and consumer clients" (Johnson, 1977b, p. 108), e.g., where a "state agency funds or is the employer of practitioners with statutory obligation to provide a given

service." Johnson notes that the significant factor here is that the occupation is guaranteed a clientele which is constituted by state definitions of need and the manner in which such needs may be served.

As Heraud (1978) notes, Johnson's argument suggests that relations between the state and the professions are complex.

> It is not just a question of a monolithic state transmitting the demand with which "servant" professions automatically comply. Tensions will develop because the state will come up against power bases in the professions (such as colleague control and professionalism) developed during an earlier, more individualistic, phase of capitalism, when corporate control was less prominent. (p. 19)

Heraud sees professions such as social work as associated with reproduction processes of capital (by which the capitalist system as a whole is maintained and replaced):

> This means the maintenance and replacement of the labour force, to which recruitment should be continuous and uninterrupted for capital appropriation to occur. Thus, health and welfare services are necessary for existing workers, while education and training facilities are important, both directly and because they underpin the ideological processes that supports the relations of production (Heraud, 1978, p. 18).

Reproduction processes, Heraud argues, may be relatively autonomous from processes of appropriation of surplus value. Professions associated with reproduction, therefore, "do not necessarily respond to the direct dictates of the central mechanisms of capitalism; thus, between the state and the professions there are discontinuities and areas of autonomy

that preclude a rigidly deterministic model" (1978, p. 19). This analysis does not concur with Braverman's thesis, since he did not account for such complexities in his analysis of labour process determinants.

Heraud's comments highlight the weakness of a purely economistic analysis in understanding the organization of public sector occupations. The economism of Marxist labour process theories leads to an overemphasis on production relations, and thus hinders an exploration of the relationship between change in the organization of social work and wider political and social antagonisms beyond the point of production. (Davies 1985).

Ideological explanation of the organization of state social work

A competing theoretical explanation of the present organization of state welfare services focuses on their ideological importance in the reproduction of the social relations of capitalism. Recent changes in the organization and practice of welfare are linked to a rightward shift in the ideological climate noticeable in many Western countries. An appreciation of the connection between economic and ideological factors is crucial to understanding the threat posed to social-democratic ideas and practices during a period of crisis for capitalism. Such a period, it is thought, makes possible a radical shift in the ideological climate. Hall

(1978) and others focusing on the British case (Gamble, 1982, 1983; Simpkin, 1979; Cockburn, 1977; etc.) believe that social democracy has now collapsed in Thatcherite Britain. The ascendancy of the New Right's monetarist economic policies and anti-welfare state social policies, it is believed, has firmly swept away the old social-democratic order. Hall believes this has now been replaced by a new consensus based on "authoritarian populism" (1979), which has taken hold as the crisis of capital has deepened. The impact of the New Right is seen not only in harsh economic policies, but also in social policies and the new politics of welfare.

This thesis of the law-and-order or "exceptional state" has been advanced by Stuart Hall (1978) and others. This theoretical position at an ideological level is similar to Braverman's approach to the economic level in that the notion of "control" over the working class is central. In order to theoretically situate the relationship of a changed ideological climate to the labour process of state welfare workers, we will briefly summarize Nigel Parton's (1981) application of Hall's thesis of moral panic to the issue of child abuse.

Rise of the New Right

The crisis of capital, Hall and others contend, has led to a right-wing ideological shift. Proponents of the New Right argue for the freeing up of market forces and concomitant reduction and reshaping of the public sector. Theorists of New Right economics and social policies point out:

> At the heart of the Tory approach to the welfare state is the assumption that the market is the most efficient allocator of resources. Conversely, it is argued that the welfare state stifles individual initiative and limits "freedom." . . . So . . . the frontiers of the welfare state must be rolled back to make room for more capitalist enterprise and individual self-help.
>
> The guise under which this classic laissez-faire aversion to state welfare has passed in recent years is the apparently apolitical notion of efficiency. Thus, the government has asserted frequently that public expenditure must be cut back because it lies at the heart of Britain's economic difficulties and that there is no alternative. (Walker, 1984, p. 50).

From the premise of an economic crisis, Hall and others are concerned to elucidate the ideological response to this crisis and the entrenchment of a law-and-order state or disciplinary state in Britain. This is most fully elaborated in Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the State and Law and Order (1978). Of particular relevance to social service work is their use of the concept of "moral panic" and their analysis of the role of such panics in securing a new ideological consensus. The term "moral panic" was originated by S. Cohen, who claimed that:

> Societies appear to be subject every now and then to periods of moral panic. A condition, episode, person, or group of persons emerges to become defined as a threat to societal values and interests . . . Sometimes the object of the panic is quite novel and at other times it is something which has been in existence long enough but suddenly appears in the limelight (Cohen, 1980, p. 9).

Moral panics are signified when the "reaction to a perceived threat is out of all proportion to its actual existence." Successful moral panics define the boundaries of

concern within the dominant ideology and are critical in legitimizing unusual state intervention. Hall argues that moral panics are one of the principal forms by which a silent majority is won over to the support of increasingly coercive measures on the part of the state. (Davies 1985).

"Moral panic" and child abuse

Parton (1981) uses the concept of moral panic to analyze the reaction to child abuse during the mid-seventies in Britain. Starting from the premise that child abuse has existed in some form throughout history, Parton wants to explain how and why it came to be identified as a specific social problem, requiring active state intervention, in the early seventies. He inserts this process of "discovery" and consolidation of child abuse as a problem within a larger context of changes in "material conditions and ideological forces" within British society. The Maria Colwell tragedy inquiry in 1974 and subsequent series of child abuse tragedies precipitated an unprecedented attack on social work and scapegoating of social workers. Parton argues that the reaction to these events can be characterized as a "moral panic" and links the events in statutory child welfare practice in the mid-seventies to the increasing dominance of the New Right. The child-abuse panic, Parton believes, produced a climate favourable for management to "consolidate administrative and managerial procedures in the new social service department"

(1979, p. 441). This process of management consolidation is linked by Bolger et al. (1980) to other developments in the restructuring of the state cutbacks in health and social services and education, which is, in turn, related to the restructuring of capital engendered by the economic crisis.

After the Maria Colwell tragedy, Parton and others argue, a shift in the social work role occurred. Social service departments, anxious to avoid similar incidents, have become "more overtly controlling, potentially more punitive, and act as an adversary as often as helper" (Packman, 1981) in dealing with families. Thus, Parton wants to argue that the "rise of the new right," represented by the phenomenon of Thatcherism in England, has a direct relationship to the practice of social work within state welfare structures. Parton believes that social workers have thus been pushed into a coercive and intrusive practice, particularly in child-abuse work. The social work role is increasingly one of policing deviant families. (Davies 1985).

Lésemann and Renaud (1980) describe a similar shift in practice orientation as particularly associated with the Youth Protection Act in Quebec. They argue that since this act has been in force there has been a displacement of traditional, voluntary clientele in favour of non-voluntary, statutory clients. Further, this change in the client population has been accompanied by a corresponding shift in orientation of practitioners from intervention within a therapeutic rela-

tion to intervention within an authority or social control context.

For Lésemann and Renaud (1980):

> . . . la loi 24 et son véhicule, la DPJ, sont peut-être des instruments de protection de la jeunesse, mais elles sont certainement des instruments de modification de la pratique, de l'élimination des pratiques associées à un modèle traditionnel basé sur l'autonomie du professionnel, la motivation du client, la compétence thérapeutique et de "focalisation" des Centres de Services Sociaux sur le champ spécifique des populations cibles définies par le Ministère des Affaires Sociales dans ses fonctions de gestion du contrôle social. (p. 57)

Following this theoretical position, it would not be coincidental that such a reorientation of welfare practice would occur within the context of an economic crisis and subsequent shake-up of capital. Such a context creates for the state an increased need for domestic stability. The experience of economic crisis heightens the need for state supports and underwriting of families' caring functions, yet the reduction of the public sector simultaneously denies this possiblity. Families must therefore be disciplined to "manage" on their own; those who fail to do so are subject to coercive state intervention. Within this optic, the example of the moral panic around child abuse could be seen as a vehicle for heightened management control over statutory practice of state social workers. Such managerial control is consistent with the postulated tendency to centralize state operations in advanced capitalist states. Management control over the

labour process of welfare workers would be crucial to this process. In the optic of these theorists, then, it could be argued that the climate of insecurity in social service departments created by the child abuse panic facilitated the assertion of management control and the reshaping of social relations within the organization of state social work.

Weaknesses of these approaches in relation to state welfare work

The thesis of ideological determinism (Hall, 1978, 1979; Parton, 1981) is consistent with Braverman's (1974) thesis of economic determinism in that they both advance the notion of control as crucial. In Braverman's case, he is concerned with capital's control over the labour process in production settings; while Hall and Parton are concerned with the state's reassertion of ideological control in a period of hegemonic crisis which, it is argued, issues into the "law and order" exceptional form of the state.

Conclusion regarding theoretical explanations of the organization of work

These different perspectives, economic and ideological, have some resonance within the current context of social services, yet it is our contention that they are over-deterministic in relation to the organization and practice of social work. While it is clear that general economic and political conditions do exert significant constraints, this does not

imply that the organization of social work and its practice are in any way "determined" by events and forces at this macro level. Similarly, the shift in the ideological context does not necessarily have direct and uniform consequences on the delivery of services. Neither deskilling nor simple social control theories adequately explains the present division of labour within social service structures. Furthermore, as some feminist theorists have argued, simple critiques of welfare practice ignore the complexity of problems social workers contend with, such as child abuse and family violence. Feminist welfare theorists (Gordon, 1985) call attention to the need for an analysis of gender and age relations as they might affect the organization of the delivery of service. This approach attempts to come to grips with the complex interrelationships between patriarchy, the family, and the organization of state welfare (Dale and Foster, 1986; Brook and Davis, 1985). This feminist theoretical framework highlights the predominance of women in the field of welfare as both givers and receivers of services. Such an approach allows us to capture a more adequate theoretical basis upon which a reorganization of professional welfare work can proceed. We now turn to an examination of the position of women as workers, as social workers, and as clients of social service structures.

FEMINIST PERSPECTIVES: WOMEN AS WORKERS

As workers employed by the social services sector, women have needs which both parallel and diverge from those of other workers. Identical needs as workers include those rights usually covered under collective bargaining (rights of association, redress, seniority, etc.), as well as the many arrangements which combine to structure working conditions, both informal and formally negotiated. What differentiates women's demands as working people from those made by all workers? Clearly, women as workers need what all workers wish to gain through collective bargaining, but beyond decent working conditions a second group of demands is put forward by their needs as women workers with heavy parental responsibilities. Day care, parental leave, flexible hours, job sharing, and adequate benefits for part-time workers are examples. Since women workers represent from 69.7 to 74.5 percent of social service workers (Nichols-Heppner, 1984, Table 10), these claims are important to their working lives.

Theoretical explanation of women workers' position in the labour market

Mainstream economic and sociological theories addressing the position of women in the paid labour force divide into status-attainment-based theory and dual labour market theories. The former set of theories tends to conclude that society allocates status to men and to women in the same way,

primarily through educational attainment and qualification. If, this school argues, women acquired educational preparation identical to men's, differences would be eliminated in their labour market position, in particular salary returns to education. "Supply" characteristics determine position, and hence wages. Dual market labour theory, on the other hand, posits <u>different</u> labour markets and different recruitment patterns for men and for women, acknowledging that many aspects of the labour market are organized disadvantageously for women. "Demand" characteristics are thus emphasized. Whatever may be women's educational attainments or sex-role socialization, that theory runs, gender divisions within labour markets will predominate in structuring jobs, and hence wages. What needs to change in this view is skewed occupational job assignment. However, critics of both these mainstream theories point to their mutual theoretical neglect of determinants of <u>all</u> occupations in the structure of work under capitalism, and note that they take as given both the structure of monopoly capitalism and patriarchal social relations. Neglect of the latter leads them to ignore women's responsibilities at home and for children.

A more complex view of the unequal effects on women's wages of home responsibilities argues that women's unpaid work as wives, mothers, and carers structures their paid work experience in three ways. First, a woman may seek work nearer home or on a part-time basis because of her extended work-

ing hours; next, she may suffer from society's monetary undervaluation of her paid work as "secondary" to her "real" job; and third, her paid work itself may be undervalued whether or not she has other responsibilities but merely because it is done by a woman (reinforcement and leak-over from the earlier factors). Focusing on the public sphere alone with an abrupt demarcation from the private sphere means that it is men's working experience which will define working conditions. In effect, women's paid work has suffered from the consistent undervaluation of their unpaid work. Lewis (1983) argues for the equality of men's and women's claims in both the public and private spheres. "Breaking down sexual divisions in the public and private sphere thus implies a fundamental change in the way work is defined and hence in the degree of esteem and pay that is derived from different jobs" (Lewis, 1983, p. 104). That we need to focus on structures that perpetuate equality rather than inequality in individuals' lives is shown by the positive effects of collective bargaining on women's wage levels (Labour Canada, 1985).

Rising employment for women

Furthermore, contradictions in women's actual and perceived working lives will be exaggerated, not diminished, given rising rates of employment of women. In 1985, fifty-one percent of the Canadian population were women. Employed

women represented just over forty percent of the paid labour force, so that for all ages, women's average rate of participation in the labour force is now fifty-two percent (versus seventy-eight percent for men). But it is worth noting that among younger men and women there is a growing congruence in participation rates, as well as a phenomenal rise in rates of married women's paid employment. Married women, who are sixty-one percent of all Canadian women, represent sixty percent of the female labour force. Employed married women, then, represent fifty-five percent of all married women in Canada, which means that one in every four workers in the labour force is a married woman. And the rates show no sign of decline.

Resources needed by women workers

What implication has this analysis for women's needs as workers? Perhaps the major service gap for women as workers is day care. Despite a law on day care promulgated in 1979, the Quebec Conseil du Statut de la Femme reports that as of 1985:

- the garderies can accommodate only nine percent of the estimated 286,000 children under six in need of care, even if the number of places doubled between 1979 and 1984 (to 26,393 places).

- Only 1,519 family day-care places existed (1984). And daycare for very young children is minimal (about 1,500 places for children 0 to 18 months), with 145 total for handicapped children.

- Fewer than five percent of school-age children had after-school care available.

- Financing of day care is inadequate; subsidies cover only twenty-two percent of costs. School-age day-care centres close during summer and school holidays. Thus, day care for many low-wage earners is financially burdensome.

Finally, measures designed in the short term to make the double working day barely possible include flexible time scheduling, part-time work with full benefits pro rata, shared jobs, parental leave at childbirth or adoption, and a small bank of parental leave days for children's needs (i.e., five days per year for illness, appointments, etc.). Each has been subject to negotiation in collective bargaining. However, Nichols-Heppner (1984) has shown elsewhere that women must organize within their own unions to achieve collective-bargaining outcomes favourable to their needs as workers.

As workers with domestic responsibilities of their own, women's work at home is also on their shoulders. Resources to spread the burden have not been sufficient in either quantity or quality, so that women as workers can be workers essentially in the same manner as men. If men and women are to be free equally as workers, the major bargainable items now seen as "women's issues" must be reframed as "working people's issues."

WOMEN AS SOCIAL WORKERS

What is the nature of the social work task in 1987, and how do women adapt to it? "Care" and "control" exemplify two necessary poles for understanding the black-box reality of social work. To lay exclusive stress on either is to deny the somewhat messy day-to-day reality which practice addresses. We have argued above that social control theories' simple determinism ignores the caring aspects of much of social service work, yet to move too far away from the social control perspective is to lose sight of evidence of the class position of social service clientele and professionals' power over them. However, even when class relationships are acknowledged, a simplistic view of social workers as agents of social control ignores the complex richness of client-worker exchanges. For example, clients are not passive recipients, but rather are active on their own behalf. Further, as well as being controlling, social workers can also be helpful instrumentally, when resources exist. Moreover, race, cultural, and ethnic factors complicate any narrowly reductionist view of what social workers do. And finally, for women social workers with (largely) women clients gender relationships must also be part of the analysis. Linda Gordon (1985) spells out specifically in terms of child abuse that one of the problems with a simple social-control critique is that when it is applied to personal or intrafamily problems it can help to perpetuate the masking of another set of inequali-

ties, those between men and women, or parents and children. Thus, in terms of the work social workers do it is necessary to think both of class and of gender relationships.

"Caregiving work" and women social workers

Women social workers do share a common socialization with women clients toward "caring." If so, then women's common socialization has implications for the way the work is done and for the way the work is organized. Indeed, Barnard (1971) considers that the assignment to women of "the all-pervading function: stroking" means that the behaviours that constitute stroking add up to a description of the ideal-typical woman wherever she is found, always healing, restoring, enabling, and building others up. The process and skills needed in caring work and in mothering are similar, as Ungerson (1983) shows:

> 1. Time, available at short notice and in flexible lumps;
> 2. High levels of skill in domestic tasks . . .
> 3. High levels of social skill in, for example, talking to their clients . . . to assess their present and future needs;
> 4. Skills in information-gathering about other services, and ability to manipulate other services on the client's behalf;
> 5. Ability to act autonomously over a wide range of tasks of widely differing skill level;
> 6. Punctuality and reliability;
> 7. Ability to operate over long periods in fairly isolated circumstances, engaging in routine and often unpleasant tasks, with . . . very little measurable "success," let alone positive response from the client. (p. 64)

Caregiving work can be looked at as "caring about" or as "caring for." Caring about someone is a phenomenon (Waerness, 1984) that comes into being in relations between at least two people, where the carer shows concern or affect or devotion toward the other, the cared for. But it is the work of caring for someone with which social work is most concerned: caregiving work results when help or services are performed for the good of persons who cannot perform the activity for themselves. Caregiving work is distinguished from personal service. Although the same act may be done, in a personal service relation the rendering of service has most frequently to do with a difference in status or power between the provider and the receiver. This distinction is different from that between personal service acts of care and acts of reciprocity. This new area of scholarship is contentious, since it shifts the societal definition of how women are expected to care for others. Among work of interest is that discussing women's caregiving work at the community level (Wilson, 1982); in terms of societal welfare (Land and Rose, 1985); and discussing implications of the shift for the organization of social work (Dalley, 1983; Waerness, 1984; Brook and Davis, 1985). Clearly, caregiving will continue to need restructuring.

The aims of caregiving work in the public sector are discussed by Waerness. Caregiving work may be directed toward growth or results (short-term work, acute care, or

teaching); caregiving may be connected with stagnation (the maintenance of functioning or avoidance of deterioration such as work with the chronically ill); or caregiving may be connected only with deterioration (care of the dying). The first category, growth, is the most readily accepted as a social service goal. The second category, services connected with stagnation, demands greater subtlety in defence and in claims for resources. But however defined, control over resources can be a facet of control over clients or can be used for alleviation.

The paradox is that as economic times get tougher, and cuts in social services eat into muscle, a need arises for more "caring" in society. A society that values caring, self-sacrifice, and a softening of cash-nexus brutality has need of mothering qualities. The irony is that those called upon to provide it are deprived of it in their own right. Indeed, to call attention to women's need of mothering is to call into question the value of caring work they do, whose very definition is that it should be as selfless as the ideal mother. Brook and Davis point out that those connections must be more openly acknowledged and debated within social work training and practice, and at the level of state planning. "What is more, the problems of being a carer at home or in hierarchical welfare organizations need to be viewed from a perspective that recognizes it is women who experience the problems most acutely" (Brook and Davis, 1985, p. 144).

Professional ideologies and women social workers

This points toward the critique of professional ideology relative to the control of women clients by women workers. Dale and Foster (1986) point to social work's ideological legacy from the 1950s and 1960s of psychodynamic, sexist, and functionalist notions of gender division, remarking that this intellectual baggage is individualizing and victim-blaming in large part. Examples include models of treatment of "sexually promiscuous girls" and wives who "provoke" husbands' violence. In an oppressive world, such treatment models are little oriented toward change. Women are also frequently vulnerable to blame by welfare professionals, for when a family fails in any way they may look for the woman to blame within the family, because it is her role and duty to see that it functions effectively. When a family fails or breaks she may be held responsible. Such ideological control is one ground for critique by feminists of the use of "care and control" elements directed particularly at women clients.

Women social workers and decisional hierarchies

That women professionals are also far from represented in decisional posts in Quebec social service structures is clear. In regional health and social service councils women occupied 20.9 percent of posts in 1983, compared to twenty percent in 1978 (Nations Unies, 1985, section II-B-19). And while women traditionally managed health institutions in

Quebec, with the advent of "enterprise"-style management they have been displaced (Nations Unies, 1985, section II-B-21). In effect, although in 1984 research on the socio-economic profile of employees of the Ministry of Social Affairs led to a program of equality of opportunity for women within the réseau, women are as yet poorly represented as social service managers (Nations Unies, 1985, section II-B-20). Here, as elsewhere, women are poorly represented within senior management posts, and this might affect the allocation and control of resources and programs for women clients.

WOMEN AS CLIENTS

As clients, women's needs arise from their disfavoured structural position in society. As social welfare clients, they have control neither over the definition of their own problems nor over scarce resources that might respond to their needs. A woman's problem may originate in her lived experience as a woman, yet she faces a social service structure which takes little account of how she arrived at where she finds herself, which defines in its own terms her needs and the services it offers her.

Mainline evaluative criteria for evaluating social services--participation by recipients of service, client satisfaction, and accessibility--need to be looked at through the lens of gender to address women's specific needs. Traditional conceptions of patients or clients and providers continue

to dominate models of client-helper interaction. Lewis and Oleson (1985), in discussing women's health, point out that a static view of the health care system not as participatory and processual but as characterized by a "post-office model" of receipt and delivery works to the detriment of women's autonomy. Rather, an expanded definition of women's social health could include individual well-being and choice as essential elements, since narrowing a definition of client need to what is convenient for the organization to provide narrows our ability to understand its meaning in the client's life. A further parallel between health and social service provision comes from the feminist critique of technocratic and patriarchal medicine which led to feminist health services (Oleson and Lewis, 1985).

Models of services which are closer to the articulated needs of women may be found, for example, in shelters for battered women, rape crisis centres, parent-run day-care centres, some voluntary local community agencies, and other alternative social service organizations. Characteristics these organizations share include non-hierarchical work relations, and control of goal-setting and service delivery by workers and clients. Such services are well placed to show linkages between the lived experience of women and social services' response. For example, violence against women has as a common thread child sexual and physical abuse, rape, battered wives, and abuse of the elderly. Whether, for pur-

poses of action divisions are made into different kinds of violence, in the lived experience of women clients connections exist which demand a response from social work and social services.

For women clients, particularly in conditions of increasing feminization of poverty, attacking social benefits through heightened cuts in service affects women in two ways. Rose and Rose (1983) observe that in the United Kingdom the cut in the "social wage" reduced the number of jobs and job protection which has benefitted women collectively by providing jobs. When social services are cut, not only is a numerically important source of jobs lost, but the loss of services affects women within the family. By denying needed services for child care, the frail elderly, and family maintenance services, women's unpaid labour at home is made much harder. The net effect is to push women out of the labour force and into unpaid conditions at home, made harder since this "natural domain" of women implies dependence on a man or the state. Finally, the effect of political decision at the state level to reduce services is a decision to prioritize production over reproduction, effects of which may be seen in a falling birth rate, which demographers tell us is significant for Quebec.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Women in poverty: individual pathology?

To the degree that people are poor, which in our society means command of fewer resources, their personal, legal, familial, and material problems will be greater. Similarly, their education levels are likely to be lower, and their health less good. Women are particularly at risk, comprising as they do sixty percent of the adult Canadian population living in poverty (NCW, 1979). Within that population of women in poverty, families headed by women and the aged are important sectors of social service clientele. It is not surprising to find that six in every ten women under age 65 who are single parents are raising their children on incomes below the poverty line. A single mother on social assistance living in a city receives from sixty-two to seventy-six percent of the poverty line, depending on the province. Of all single mothers, most (sixty-eight percent) have incomes below three-quarters of the poverty line, and one-quarter are very poor, living on incomes below half of poverty line minima (NCW, 1986).

For older, unattached people, poverty rates are also high: forty-nine percent for men and sixty percent for women; for aged families with men as family head the poverty rate is ten percent, compared with twenty-five percent for aged female-headed families. In effect, eighty percent of elderly women live on incomes below $10,000 per year, while fifty-

four percent of aged men do (NCW, 1984). Such facts reveal areas of collective social pathogenesis, yet through their predominantly individualistic approach social service structures respond to their clients as if each woman's situation were the product if not of individual choice then of individual misfortune.

We are arguing not for neglect of service to individuals, but rather that awareness of socially pathogenic structures is essential to empowering people to take responsibility. As Labonté and Penfold point out:

> No longer should health (social) problems be seen as individual risk consequences requiring individual behavioural change. Instead, health and its obverse, disease, should be understood as complex, highly conditioned social phenomena which demand social change through collective forms of action. (1981a, p. 6)

Although far from novel, this emphasis on the need for attention to structural intervention for structurally caused problems is still important. Without that awareness, the familiar syndrome of "blaming the victim" takes precedence: responsibility for her situation is assigned wholly to the individual. By logical extension, this assignment of responsibility and concomitant lack of self-reliance then proves that in some manner she chose her situation. And by further extension, without professional intervention designed to force, cajole, lead, or "change" the symptoms of such passively self-destructive individuals they will continue willfully to choose disease over wellness, poverty over a comfor-

table life. The individual client thus ends up the thinly disguised villain of the social service structure, behaving contrary to "human nature" and plainly irresponsibly. By implication, our unequal society, with its sexual asymmetry, is the natural, good one and is not accountable for its part in individuals' situations.

Need

Quebec as a society, mediated through its legal and social service policies, solves the question of need by answering what is to be divided, among whom, and under what principles. How restrictive shall social service structures be? Who shall be excluded? Who privileged? Who shall be controlled? By whom? And how much difference is tolerable in a democratic society?

In relation to women a concept of need takes on resonances both of class and of gender important to answering these questions. We have argued that need rests on a basis of valuing equality of human worth; this somewhat abstract notion translates into rejection of women's economic and social dependency. In Marx's formulation of need, four distinctions are made: natural needs, necessary needs, luxury needs, and radical needs (Heller, 1977; Rose and Rose, 1982). In opposition to and criticism of the alienated notion of need fostered by a market society, where the market determines both need and need satisfaction, Marx created a

positive category of non-alienated needs, certainly not specific to women but applicable to them. Natural needs are irreducible, yet are also to some extent socially conditioned. The second category, necessary needs, is relative in a given society to its level of material production, while the third category, luxury needs, are needs by definition beyond the reach of the working class. As capitalism develops, what were luxury needs become necessary needs (e.g., telephone, television). However, as capitalism develops, so also "radical needs" are constantly growing, and it is precisely these which are not satisfied within capitalism. Radical needs are women's or men's consciousness of alienation, not merely of misery or poverty in a narrow sense which could be satisfied by greater possession, but also the empirical recognition that social relations are alienated and that a need exists for radical change.

Contradictions for clients and social workers in the therapeutic casework model

Social work's claim to professional status and autonomy has historically been linked to the therapeutic casework model of intervention. The casework method has long been criticized for the unequal power relations it may generate between social workers and their clients. With the increased attention to "high-risk" areas of practice such as child abuse, it is now quite obvious that the model of individual casework

and the responsibility it carries also poses serious difficulties for social work practitioners.

Media inquiries into "how the system failed" point to the many weaknesses and contradictions inherent in the casework structure. Yet professional social work is still held up as a useful means of addressing social problems such as child abuse. There is an implicit assumption here that such problems can be resolved within the existing social order; however, this assumption exists side by side with an unavoidable awareness of the structural determinants which produce such social problems and of the class background of social work's clientele. Within the present organization of welfare, "social" problems become individual problems and those "afflicted" are thought to be amenable to case-based "treatment." (Davies and Thomson, 1983). As Simpkin (1979) points out, the success of the method is seen to depend on the competence of those carrying it out, while the viability of the reforming activity itself is left unquestioned.

Professionals justify demands for autonomy by reference to their "expertise." Such expertise, particularly in the case of social work, is not simply a technical commodity and cannot be abstracted from the cultural and political context in which it is operating. Despite efforts to establish professional control over the occupation of social work, its development in capitalist societies under state auspices has not borne this out. Instead, an organizational model which

is a hybrid mixture of elements both of professionalism and of hierarchical bureaucracy has developed. (Davies 1985).

The Quebec case: Professionals versus technocrats

The bureaucratic organization of welfare set the stage for an ongoing battle within social services between those upholding the traditional professional model of individual casework and, on the other hand, the new vision for those who believe that through technocratic planning a "rational" organizational model of service delivery can be found.

In 1986, social workers certainly cannot be characterized as unfettered autonomous experts; rather, they are bound by a variety of organizational and structural constraints which shape to a large degree their practice options. Yet even given these structural constraints and despite bureaucratic management efforts to limit and control the exercise of discretion within social service agencies, a certain element of autonomy or discretion is inherent in day-to-day practice (Davies, 1985). Yet because state social work practice is increasingly dominated by statutory protection work with a non-voluntary clientele, this element of autonomy may be viewed with increasing ambivalence by front-line workers. The area of child abuse practice, for example, highlights the tension associated with the individual exercise of discretion where emotional anxieties and risks to both the child, the parents, and the workers are considerable.

The weakness of the individual casework model is obvious in these conditions, and especially so with the current moral panic surrounding statutory child welfare work. Rather than desiring more autonomy in their practice, front-line service workers are looking for some measure of protection and support from their peers and supervisors in carrying out their jobs (Davies, 1985).

Front-line workers in social service organizations need structure and support. Yet at the same time the intrinsic necessity in social work practice to exercise discretion and to make judgments must be recognized. Workers' need for support and for structure has not been met by management efforts to augment control, whether through monitoring of direct practice, by specification of step-by-step procedures or manuals, or by management case review committees. These bureaucratic initiatives are only marginally pertinent to the chaos of front-line practice. (Davies 1985).

Any contemplated changes in the organization of social services need to take seriously the anxiety and complexity of many practice dilemmas. As well, the constraints and importance of forces beyond the control of individual workers and clients needs recognition.

The debate in social welfare practice has traditionally seen professionals on one side and bureaucrats on the other, with clients generally ignored. The terms of the old debate have long been outmoded. The old polarization--profession/

bureaucracy-technocracy--is in the interest neither of front-line workers suffering from "burnout" nor of their clients, whose difficulties are compartmentalized only to the "addressable" aspects of their problems (e.g., DYP aspect). The sharpening contradictions of social welfare practice in the 1980s creates undeniable pressure for change in practice. Without paying attention to structural determinants of social problems such as poor housing, low income, lack of child-care supports, the numbers of social casualties at the doorstep of social services will contine to grow unchecked. At the social service level, responding to this within the casework structure becomes more and more untenable, given massive resource constraints and growing waiting lists. (Davies 1985). The only way forward, it seems to us, is through a process of «democratization» of welfare structure and practices in order to reduce individualization of both clients and workers.

Possibilities for change in social service organization

Possibilities for change within state social work structures which might be explored at the organizational level of social service work include a decreasing emphasis on the individual casework approach and a corresponding movement toward more groupwork and community development/organization approaches. Such a shift would challenge the assumption of individual pathology which is implicit in the dominance of the case-by-case response.

Specific areas where more democratic practices might be adopted include the development of peer supervision models and the involvement of clients and client group representatives (e.g., natural parents associations, foster parent associations, organizations of children in substitute care) in case conference decision making. As well, intake policies and procedures for case allocation might be subject to a process of peer decision making and client approval. Resource distribution policies, as well, might be subject to client/worker determination at the organizational level.

Alternative models and a new professionalism

If prevention is to be a real aim of public social services, how and under what terms can this be addressed, given the realities of gender and class described above? We have argued for unambiguous rejection of a model of individual etiology and for acceptance of a social service model that addresses collective needs and problems.

Such a collective approach is the hallmark of alternative services developed by communities, either geographical communities or communities of interest, for themselves, as analyzed in Shragge, Létourneau et al.* For our purposes

* La dynamique des communautés et les nouvelles solidarités dans l'offre des services sociaux, notamment à Montréal for this Commission. For fuller description of these services, see that paper.

here, we may stress some aspects of those alternative services which could be adopted within the state sector.

1) Services are decentralized and democratic: each unit is self-governing, even where it is also involved in coalitions of local units. This means that collective concerns can be adhered to collectively, but local needs can be met with locally determined services.

2) Because local units are responsible for budget and program goals, there is evidence of greater responsiveness to needs expressed by the community. The community link leads to flexibility and innovativeness. At times this flexibility leads them toward exciting pioneering responses to needs which have yet to be officially acknowledged elsewhere. Only much later, often, are their pioneering efforts recognized.

3) They are non-hierarchical in administration and minimally technocratic, since a large measure of budgetary and mandate control is determined locally. Far from sacrificing any presumed efficiency of centralized bureaucratic control, it appears that local program criteria and accountability are superior in responding to local community needs. As such, this provides a significant alternative to the industrial army model currently characteristic of social service organization. Proof of their ability to respond may even be to the detriment of

alternative services, as they rise to fill gaps in the network of state services.*

Finally, it is our belief that democratic locally controlled social service units have the likelihood of avoiding several current ills in the social service structures: worker alienation and burnout, increasing client dependence on state intervention, and declining local initiative. Because local units are democratically responsible to local people, distance from the "all-giving" state is increased, local initiative and pride are increased, and appropriate solutions are tried. Decreasing the distance between recipients and providers permits common renewal of purpose and greater fruitfulness in solution.

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* The feminist shelters for women victims of violence are increasingly being pressured to take <u>any</u> woman in difficulty because of the lack of other resources. These clients include women with psychiatric, drug, alcohol, and child abuse or youth protection problems, as well as homelessness, clients who are outside the mandate and expertise of the shelters.

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Ce programme avait notamment pour objectifs de contribuer à la [illegible] préhension des problèmes actuels du système des services de santé [illegible] services sociaux, de vérifier l'impact de diverses hypothèses [illegible] et, à plus long terme, de stimuler la recherche dans ce [illegible].

Afin de rendre compte de ce programme de recherche, la Commission [illegible] a décidé, sur recommandation du comité scientifique, de publier [illegible] lection des synthèses critiques et des recherches. Le présent [illegible] s'inscrit dans le cadre de cette collection.